



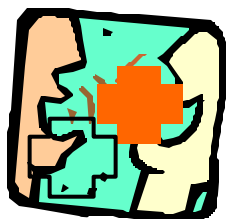
# FrontLine Employee

A newsletter from the Employee Advisory Service (EAS)

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## Hee-Haw for Health



**Lee Berk, Ph.D., of Loma Linda University** in California may be the foremost researcher on the benefits of laughter. His findings are that laughter reduces stress hormones, increases antibodies that fight upper respiratory disease, increases tolerance to pain, and increases heart rate. Humor is essential to mental health because it assists us in connecting with others, shifts the ways in which we think, and replaces distressing emotions with pleasurable feelings. You cannot feel angry, depressed, anxious, guilty, or resentful and experience humor at the same time. Humor changes how we behave, causes us to talk more, and to make eye contact with others. In experiencing humor we touch others more, increase our energy, and, as a result, may perform activities that we might otherwise avoid.

*Source: Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor*

## Blaming the Parents



**A**lthough juvenile crime has dropped in recent years, states are beefing up parental liability laws. Starting around age eight, when kids can “make decisions” that damage property or hurt others, whether intentionally or recklessly, parents can be held financially liable. The legal term is “vicarious liability” — and it holds a person responsible for something he or she did not do because of his or her relationship to the person (or child) who did it. Laws vary widely, but the amount parents can pay has skyrocketed.

*U.S. Dept. of Justice, Juvenile Justice Bulletin, Oct. 2002*

## Salvaging Family Interventions



**G**roup interventions conducted by families or friends to motivate an alcoholic or drug addict to enter treatment often work, but when they don't, following these tips can improve the odds of eventual success: (1) Hold fast to tough decisions imposed on an addict as consequences for failure to accept help. Reversing these decisions may cause an addictive disease to get worse. (2) Wait for the next incident or crisis, and in its wake, ask the addict to accept help. (3) If you separate from an alcoholic or drug-addicted relationship, do not badger the addict from afar to get help. Rekindling such a relationship will not motivate the addict to accept help. (4) Use a program like Al-Anon and follow its Twelve Steps. Then act decisively when the next drug- or alcohol-related incident occurs, making another offer to help the addict enter treatment.

## When Calm Makes You Crazy



**A**re you so busy in your job that you get stressed or anxious when blocks of time show up unfilled on your appointment calendar? Many people feel compelled to fill these free hours with more appointments and busy work to rid themselves of the anxiety. Don't fall into this trap. If your job permits, use slow times to do things you have been putting off, such as organizing your desk or work area, planning for the future, learning new skills, or preparing for upcoming projects.

## Coping with a CRISIS



**O**ccasional crises are part of life. A crisis is a major stressful event with the ability to significantly alter your life. They are part of life that no one escapes. Unfortunately, crises don't come with instruction manuals. But there are a few survival tips worth knowing about, and with them, you can improve your chances of adapting to the new circumstances crises bring.

**Open up.** Don't make a crisis a do-it-yourself experience. Reach out and communicate with others who can support you. Acknowledge the difficult impact. Share the emotional load to reduce the punch of a crisis. EAS has specialized training to help individuals or units to manage a crisis.

**Manage feelings.** Crises can produce guilt, resentment, anger, fear, and other powerful feelings you were unprepared to face. Avoid making a crisis worse by punishing yourself for what you feel. Share these feelings with those who care about you.

**Sort it out.** Discover what part of a crisis can be managed or changed. Work toward identifying and accepting that which cannot be changed.

**Take charge.** Feeling better and coping successfully with a crisis requires your participation. Without denying the importance of the crisis, decide that you will prevent your life from growing worse because of it.

**Take action.** Take steps that will improve the way you feel in the face of what a crisis brings. Small steps count. Act to make your life happier or better, acknowledging that by not coping with a crisis in this way, you risk going in the opposite direction and growing more unhappy.

## High-Rise Evacuation OSHA Fact Sheet



**T**he Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has released its new safety fact sheet on evacuating high-rise buildings. High-rise buildings are those with floors higher than 75 feet. Tips: Know your worksite emergency plan and evacuation alarm. Know how many desks or cubicles are between your workstation and the two nearest exits in case you must leave in the dark. Know where alarms are located and know the signal for evacuation. Don't ignore alarms, assuming they are false or "only drills."

## Nixing Negativity



**P**eers can often exert a powerful influence on coworkers and help them turn around a negative attitude. Steps to take:

(1) Avoid commiserating with employees who spew negativity. This is how it spreads. (2) Remind an affected coworker of the consequences of negativity, especially its effects on morale. (3) Encourage a coworker affected by negativity to use the EAP to become more proactive in the face of difficult work issues, or to better manage a negative attitude. Negativity is often *not* based on large unsolvable work problems. Instead, it is often a "life isn't fair" reaction to common workplace stresses not otherwise resolved by healthier means.

## Myth of Multitasking



**R**esearch on multitasking- doing more than one thing at a time, in the name of efficiency- shows it doesn't work. Not only can multitasking increase stress, it ultimately is less efficient. Evidence indicates that memory can be affected by the prolonged presence of adrenaline, which disturbs memory cell production. Are you blanking out in mid-sentence or forgetting what you were going to say? Multitasking could be the culprit. When you multitask (e.g., shift between computer programs, talk to people on the phone, and eat a sandwich all at the same time), you lose time and efficiency as your brain does three things: takes time to switch between tasks, shifts to the correct part of your brain needed for the present task, and discards thinking pathways used in the previous task in favor of new thinking pathways needed for the new task.

Source: Journal of Experimental Psychology: Vol. 27, No.

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